

15 June 1970

Dear Harold/~~Harold~~ Howard

I write quickly what may be my last letter to you for the next few weeks. My oral exam is scheduled for 24 June, and I need every minute for preparation. Please continue counting me in, though; I'll answer urgent stuff.

Nichols 399 picture: I can't comment on this until I see it. I am interested, so please let me have a look at it when you can.

*to HR* Other 399 pix: It may be that one of the pix taken for Thompson shows the base, but I doubt that it is close-up and imagine that it ~~explains~~ is non-informative. Archives showed me Thompson color photos, but all were at long distance compared to what we have in other photos. They show a hand holding the bullet. If one shows the base, it will have to be greatly enlarged, and may not show the detail that is necessary. Worth trying, though.

Harold's was the first close-up of 399 base. Taken after pix were made for Thompson.

Latest base photo not helpful in determining what the "powder" is. We need a close approximation of photo-W; so far, none has approached it in clarity.

*to HR* 00- buckshot: I did misunderstand what you proposed by the analogy. I now think it appropriate, but not properly phrased.

Consider the position of the Parkland docs. Before learning the results of the autopsy most (if not all) considered the front-neck wound a wound of entrance. Secret Service "interviewed" them (Perry, for the most part), and disclosed that autopsy docs concluded it was an exit wound. The autopsy determination is normally the last word in such matters, and Parkland docs were influenced by their faith in the integrity of autopsies. They were driven forcibly from their determination that the wound was entrance. Placed in their situation, I or any responsible person would have to go along with the autopsy. Boiled down to essentials, what the autopsy docs say is this: "Very well, it was a wound of exit that has all the visible characteristics of a wound of entrance."

Your writing invites the conclusion that the Parkland docs first got the wrong impression of the wound. I am convinced that their impression corresponds with the truth.

I can't make a full estimate, both because I don't now have time, and because this bit of writing has to be seen in relation to ~~what~~ other things you are writing on this.

*to HR* Missing fragment: from cracks in 399 base? I know that you are not kidding. Neither am I: NO, NO, NO!

*to HR* Lifton: If you get these pix, please let me see them. \$14 for Nix copy? I am not sure, but I think Lifton bought this from Gary for \$10 (I'm pretty sure. If so, somebody is being had.)

*to HR* Hair: I have not the least doubt that Harold meant nothing objectionable or suggestive by sending you cartoon (which I have not seen). If Harold's banter hit a sensitive nerve, then I think perhaps the length of your hair is more important to you than it should be. I take great delight in long hair grown for reasons of vanity (simply because the wearer thinks it looks or feels good that way), but am most impatient with those who put it forth as symbol of something or

other. It's difficult enough struggling with problems that stem from reality; it's absurd to invite problems inspired by symbolism. By now you may have come to the conclusion that I object to long hair. I don't; I love it. But I do object to nonsensical conformity, which I think is the inspiration for much of the long hair that I see.

I recently started letting my own hair grow long, but last week had it cut short again because my old fishing hat would no longer fit comfortably on my head-- and I need that hat, though from 5 years of unwashed perspiration it smells like a goat's ass. I shouldn't say "unwashed", but "unwashable". My wife "accidentally" threw it in with a load of wash recently. My hat was unaffected, but she had to re-wash the clothes. *She even had to wash the washing machine!*

More on hair. There are certain times when, for purely tactical reasons, short hair is better. McCarthy's "children's crusade" know this-- they have used it and will use it to very great advantage for the detriment of those whom they disfavor. It's better to lose hair temporarily than to lose an opportunity permanently. Hair grows back, but some opportunities come only once.

*to HR*  
Shirt slits: This is excellent information. I suggest that you pursue further and further. First step is to get a better copy of the exhibits. If what you have shows a slit not mentioned by Frazier, that is ample grounds for demanding to see the shirt and getting your own pictures.

Consider the possibility of the tears occurring by more than one means; i.e., started by one means and finished by another. Example: a small hole (or holes) made with a knife is elongated by tearing with the fingers.

*to HW*  
Mayhew: Good luck with him, Harold. He wants copies of the published pictures that I offered him, but has not yet sent money. When I get it, I'll make them for him.

*to*  
Shot after Z313: Lacking any evidence of this, but having strong indications that 313 was the last shot, I am strongly inclined to discount the possibility that a shot was fired after Z313. My recollection is that witnesses are unanimous that JFK's head blew up at the last shot. Although I don't like to cite witnesses in some other matters, they usually are very accurate in determining "before" and "after" events. I am not unwilling to consider the possibility of a shot after Z313, but I think some substantial indication is required before it can be taken seriously.

*to HW*  
Rankin/Redlich: In time, I'll look at the N.Y. Times index and find out if the Times reported what you want to see. If clippings are important to you, and I should forget, please remind me. It's not much trouble for me to get copies.

Have to stop now. Thanks for your good wishes on my orals.

*Dick*